CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 8 AUGUST 2001 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE START TREATY

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation dated 31 July 2001 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START Treaty).

I should be grateful if the statement could be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament to the delegations of all member States of the Conference and non-member States participating in its work.

(Signed): Vasily Sidorov
Ambassador
Permanent Representative to the
Conference on Disarmament

GE.01-64080 (E) 100801 160801

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE START TREATY

Today marks the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START Treaty), to which Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine - the States that are legal successors to the Soviet Union - and the United States of America are parties. It was signed in Moscow and came into force on 5 December 1994.

The START Treaty is at present the only international treaty under which real cuts in strategic offensive weapons are being made. Throughout the 10-year period, it has played and continues to play an important role in strengthening strategic stability and international security.

In the course of compliance with the Treaty all the strategic nuclear weapons of the former USSR have been removed to the territory of Russia. Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, as non-nuclear States, have become parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The START Treaty envisages that by the end of this year, that is, upon the completion of the third and final stage of reductions, Russia and the United States will have reduced the number of their strategic carriers to 1,600 and the warheads on them to 6,000 on each side.

A key factor and condition for the implementation of the START Treaty has been the existence of and compliance by the parties with the 1972 ABM Treaty. The parties to the START Treaty have carried out a large amount of work to liquidate strategic offensive weapons, to monitor compliance therewith, including by large-scale inspection activities and resolving the questions arising within the mechanism envisaged by the Treaty, namely the Joint Compliance and Inspection Commission.

Taking into account the experience accumulated during the past decade, Russia comes out for further radical cuts in strategic weapons to 1,500 warheads for the Russian Federation and the United States of America by 2008. The corresponding initiatives and other measures to strengthen strategic stability and its legal-treaty basis were set forth in the Statement of the Russian President of 13 November 2000, and are being further elaborated.

31 July 2001